

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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DEPT PASS EPA

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: EEWT UR US TECH
SUBJECT: DUPONT CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET FINDING OF CARCINOGENICITY IN
CHLOROPRENE

1. DURING A RECENT CALL ON AMBASSADOR, DUPONT CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD IRVING SHAPIRO MENTIONED THAT DUPONT IS INTERESTED IN RESOLVING AN ISSUE BETWEEN TWO SOVIET MINISTRIES AS TO TOXICITY OF CHLOROPRENE, AS SUBSTANCE USED IN PRODUCTION OF ARTIFICIAL RUBBER. SHAPIRO HAD COME DIRECTLY FROM YEREVAN, WHERE DUPONT IS SUPPLYING THE TECHNOLOGY, KNOW-HOW, TRAINING AND CONSULTATION ON CONSTRUCTION IN COOPERATION WITH A JAPANESE FIRM OF A \$110 MILLION PLANT FOR PRDUCTION OF SYNTHETIC RUBBER.

2. ACCORDING TO SHAPIRO, THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS TAKEN A SERIOUS VIEW OF A PUBLISHED FINDING BY SOVIET SCIENTISTS THAT CHLOROPRENE CONTAINS CARCINOGENS. (WE HAVE NOT SEEN THIS REPORT.) ON THE OTHER HAND THE MINISTER OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, KOSTANDOV, APPARENTLY HAS DISPUTED THESE FINDINGS, AND THE TWO MINISTRIES ARE AT LOGGERHEADS OVER THE ISSUE. SHAPIRO EXPRESSED THE CONCERN THAT DUPONT
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WOULD BE VICTIMIZED BY VERY STRICT SOVIET STANDARDS, BASED ON THESE FINDINGS. THE CRITICAL THING, IN HIS VIEW, IS TO GET TO THE DATA THAT LIE BEHIND THE FINDINGS, AND TO THIS END DUPONT HAS APPROACHED THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON FOR ASISTANCE. WHAT IS DESIRED IS A MEETING OF US AND SOVIET SCIENTISTS TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE FOR THE FINDING. SO FAR, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE FROM

THE SOVIET EMBASSY.

3. THE AMBASSADOR INQUIRED IF WE COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE IN THIS ISSUE. SHAPIRO STATED THAT WE COULD BE HELPFUL BY URGING THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO DUPONT'S REQUEST THAT A DELEGATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS GO TO THE SOVIET UNION TO TRY TO MEET WITH SOVIET SPECIALISTS IN THE INTEREST OF RESOLVING THE IMPASSE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE WE WOULD NOT WISH TO BECOME INVOLVED IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN INTERNAL SOVIET DISPUTE WITH BOTH BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERTONES, WE WOULD SEE NO HARM IF DEPARTMENT WOULD TAKE UP MATTER WITH SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. OUR INTEREST WOULD BE STRICTLY IN SEEING IF THERE WAS SOVIET INTEREST IN BRINGING APPROPRIATE EXPERTS TOGETHER TO ANALYSE THE DATA IN QUESTION. THE RESULTS OF SUCH A MEETING COULD CONCEIVABLY BE IN THE BROAD GENERAL INTEREST OF BOTH THE US AND THE USSR, AS WELL AS POSSIBLY SERVING THE NEEDS OF AN AMERICAN COMPANY.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE DEPARTMENT RAISE THIS SUBJECT WITH THE SOVIET EMBSSY IN WASHINGTON TO ASCERTAIN IF THERE HAS YET BEEN ANY DECISION CONCERNING DUPONT'S PROPOSAL.
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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